

ABSTRACT

Background removal processing applies image processing indiscriminately to the whole image on the basis of an assumed presence of a background. Therefore, if the input image has a background and the luminance tone level of this background is relatively low, the background area cannot be removed.

It is made possible to scan a document with a color scanner 40 and determine a blank paper area constituting the background of the document image, i.e. a substantially white area, according to a prescribed frequency distribution of image data constituting the image. It is further made possible to provide clear contrast between the background of the image reproduced from image data and the non-background part of the image and to remove noise components appearing on the background, such as what is written or drawn on the wrong side of paper seen through, because, once the presence of a background is determined, the substantially white background area is retouched to white, i.e. the highest tone, by image data retouching according to a correction curve.

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